



Ottawa Choral Society Music Director Matthew Larkin unveils 69th Season

For immediate release:

Season Launch Highlights

Following the thrilling final concert of the Ottawa Choral Society's 2008-09 season on Sunday, May 3rd, Music Director Matthew Larkin invited patrons to a launch party to hear about the exciting 2009-10 concert season he has in store for them. Going into his fifth year with Ottawa's 110-voice symphonic chorus, Larkin prefaced his remarks by saying that he is having "an absolutely terrific time working with the choir". He recalled the choir's November performance of Thomas Tallis's magnificent aural soundscape in 40 separate parts, *Spem in alium*, saying that he is "tremendously pleased that our choristers are so secure as individual singers that I was able to programme the most daunting repertoire and achieve such a beautiful performance." Larkin told the audience "the members of the Choral Society continue to inspire me. We have an incredible diversity of singers: health professionals, lawyers, academics, clergy, scientists, engineers and financial wizards; seasoned choral musicians, and talented young people who are just discovering the great masterworks of Western choral literature, and I am proud to share the stage with them." He ended with the promise that "whether you come to be challenged or inspired, our 2009-10 subscription season will take your breath away with its musical genius, offer you food for thought, make you smile, and leave you knowing that you've had an experience of lasting significance in the concert hall."

2009-10 Subscription Series Concerts

Christmas with the Choral Society! Saturday, December 5, 2009, 8:00 pm

Larkin announced a three-concert subscription package that opens in the splendid twin-steeped Church of St. Francis of Assisi with a revival of the family-oriented audience favourite, ***Christmas with the Choral Society***. To celebrate the season, Larkin has invited Jackie Hawley and her Ottawa Children's Choir, and an exuberant brass quintet and organ, to share the stage with the OCS. The two choirs will join to braid a gorgeous garland of Christmas music ornamented with delightful motets and carols by **Gabrieli, Schutz, Sweelinck, Distler, Willan and Britten**, among others. Special highlights will be Daniel Pinkham's jubilant *Christmas Cantata* along with the exciting **world premiere** of Matthew Larkin's new music for Christmas, commissioned by the OCS for the children and adults to perform together.

St. Matthew Passion: Sunday, March 28, 2010, 2:30 pm

In the week preceding Easter, Larkin will lead the Choral Society in the ***St. Matthew Passion***, Johann Sebastian Bach's monumental choral drama. Certain to become a milestone in this generation of the Choir's history, the Passion's cast of characters calls for six leading soloists along with smaller cameo roles, a semi-chorus of boys' voices, double chorus and double orchestra. The *St. Matthew Passion* is deeply affecting liturgical theatre. Through its grave majesty and Bach's unparalleled musical imagination, the Passion story is telescoped across two thousand years of time and becomes visceral and immediate. The performance takes place in the glorious acoustic of St. Joseph's Church in Sandy Hill.

Epic and Antic! Monday, May 17, 8:00 pm

- ***Alexander Nevsky - Sergei Prokofiev***
- ***Three Limericks - Harry Somers***
- ***Concerto for Orchestra (Naughty Limericks) - Rodion Shchedrin***

The OCS subscription series concludes in the NAC's Southam Hall on **May 17th**, in **a co-production with the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra**, with Sergei Prokofiev's epic cantata, ***Alexander Nevsky***, under the direction of David Currie. Originally conceived as the score for the 1938 film *Alexander Nevsky* by the iconic Russian director Eisenstein, Prokofiev brings to life the story of the legendary 11th century Russian knight Prince Alexander Nevsky, who sent the Barbarians packing in an epic battle on the ice of the River Neva, deep in the frozen barrens of Russia. Prokofiev later developed the film score as a cantata for the concert stage where, with its electrifying Battle on the Ice, historical romance and tragic pathos, it has found a life of its own as a thrilling piece of choral theatre.

The concert will also mark Larkin's debut appearance on the podium of the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra when he will conduct ***Three Limericks***, a ribald and cabaret-like song cycle for mezzo-soprano, choir and a chamber orchestra of brass, winds and percussion, from the inimitable voice of the late Canadian composer Harry Somers. Somers penned ***Three Limericks*** in 1990 as a centenary tribute to his great friend, the beloved composer Healey Willan, who was known to have composed more than a few choice limericks of his own!

2009-10 Season Guests

Larkin has invited a splendid roster of guest artists to appear with the OCS in the upcoming season. Himself an ardent advocate of Boys choirs, he is tremendously pleased that Jackie Hawley and her **Ottawa Children's Choir** will join the OCS for December's *Christmas with the Choral Society* concert when some of Ottawa's leading brass players also will be on hand to 'blow their trumpets' to herald the natal day.

On the roster for March's *St. Matthew Passion*, a galaxy of outstanding artists that includes the **Boys' Choir of Christ Church Cathedral**, 2009 Juno Award nominee, soprano **Shannon Mercer**, tenor **Michiel Schrey** in his signature role of the Evangelist, new-comer, counter-tenor **Daniel Cabena**, tenor, **Nils Brown**, baritone **Sean Watson** and the American bass-baritone, **Sumner Thompson** as Christ. The superb musicians of the **Ottawa Music Company Orchestra** will join the choir for this presentation.

Mezzo-soprano **Michèle Bogdanowicz** dazzled the OCS audience with her virtuoso performance in the choir's 2007 concert, *Notes from America*. In the final season concert with the OSO in May 2010, Ms. Bogdanowicz's brilliant dramatic talents will thrill audience members as she moves from tragedienne in Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* to comedienne in her performance of Somers's *Three Limericks*.

A World Premiere

The choir is proud to have an inspired composer as its Music Director and for the past four seasons, has commissioned new works from Matthew Larkin. The premiere performances of his two exquisite song cycles, *Four Songs of Love and Loss* and *'wife in winter'* were triumphs that received thrilling audience reception and warm critical notice. The OCS continues the tradition in the new season with the world premiere of Larkin's new music for Christmas that will hear the beautiful voices of the children's choir in concert with the adult chorus.

Guest Engagements

During the 2009-10 season, the OCS will perform with the National Arts Centre Orchestra on three of its series concerts:

A Chorus of Hits! October 22, 23, 24, 2009- The NAC Orchestra's popular Principal Pops Conductor, Jack Everly leads the orchestra and chorus in a "Top 40" choral extravaganza that covers the entire gamut from Broadway to Cathedral to Opera Stage and the music of the cinema.

Missa Solemnis - February 10, 11, 2010 - Ludwig van Beethoven's awe-inspiring *Missa Solemnis* directed by NACO Maestro Pinchas Zukerman.

The "Symphony of a Thousand" - June 16/17, 2010 - Gustav Mahler's *Symphony No. 8 the "Symphony of a Thousand"*, in a joint performance with NACO and the Orchestre Métropolitain du Grand Montréal directed by the young Quebec superstar conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin,

Super Subscriber Packages and Rewards

Subscribers are guaranteed **premium reserved seating** and advance **programme notes** but there are many more reasons to join the OCS family of subscribers rather than simply purchasing tickets at the door on the night of the concerts. From recession-proof subscription packages to the many added values, we've tried to keep the subscriber in mind with great benefits that will appeal to everyone!

"Early Birds"

The OCS is making it even easier for its patrons to discover the rewards of the choral repertoire by offering **Early Birds**, those who send us their orders before **September 15th**, a **20% discount** off door prices. For example, the top \$148 price tag, at the door, for three individual concert tickets costs **Early Bird subscribers** only \$118- **a saving of \$30**.

Seniors packages

Seniors can take advantage of the terrific savings offered by our **Early Bird** packages or, after September 15, save by purchasing the **Senior** package for **a saving of \$24** per subscription.

Bring-Your-Friends Packages - Back for a second season!

Subscribers who want to encourage their friends to discover the joys of choral music can now **'Bring-their-Friends'** along at even more exciting savings that allow first-time subscribers to **save as much as \$50.00** per subscription.

Added Values

Choral Society subscribers receive subscriber **identification cards** and are eligible for a **15% discount** on tickets to selected NACO an OSO concerts.

OCS Eighth Notes

Subscribers receive the OCS's choral chat sheet full of arcane musical articles, news of goings-on in the wider choral world and amusing anecdotes from the rehearsal room.

Invitation to an Open Rehearsal

Subscribers are invited to sit in on an open rehearsal to watch how the masterpieces they will hear in performance are put together in the rehearsal room.

Meet the Maestro!

This is a great opportunity for our family of subscribers to meet and greet the Music Director and members of the choir in a relaxed social setting.

For Students! VoxBox is now open for business!

Students from 12–22 are encouraged to visit the **VoxBox** pages of the OCS website at www.ottawachoralsociety.com, to find out how to receive free tickets for seats in a dedicated VoxBox section of the concert hall and learn more about the music in pre-show 'prep' talks with Matthew Larkin. Members of VoxBox are also welcome to submit their own personal concert reviews, conduct interviews with OCS guest artists, and write research articles about the season's composers for posting on the VoxBox pages of the OCS website.

Our Sponsors are important to us

The Ottawa Choral Society is perennially grateful to the **City of Ottawa**, the **Ontario Arts Council** and the **Ontario Trillium Foundation**, and to its loyal sponsors within Ottawa's business community. The **Ottawa Citizen's** annual media sponsorship and concert coverage is invaluable in ensuring that music lovers know about our concerts through their feature writers and reviews and the advertising space they offer us. We are amazed by the work of the creative design team and generous sponsorship of our friends at **Llama Communications**. We also are grateful to our Accommodations Sponsor, the **Lord Elgin Hotel**, for taking excellent care of our visiting artists, and to Five-Diamond **Signatures Le Cordon Bleu Restaurant** for its sponsorship of our annual fund-raising raffle, *Crème du Choeur*. And finally, it is thanks to the philanthropy of the donors to the **Marian Pickering Memorial Fund** that we are able to carry on our thrilling *New Discoveries for Young Artists Auditions*.

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